骤雨、屋檐和彩虹

七月十八日 星期六 雷阵雨转晴

今天下午这场骤雨，说来就来，一点商量都不讲。我刚从补习班楼里出来，抬头看了看天，觉得还能撑一会儿，结果自行车才骑到半路，雨点就啪啪地砸下来，大得像豆子，打在柏油路面上腾起一层白烟，声音像谁把一口大锅扣到了整条街上。我把车冲进路边一家文具店的屋檐底下，袖子往下滴水，鞋一踩一响。

屋檐底下不止我一个人。有个卖冷饮的阿姨，一个骑电动三轮收废品的老头。谁也不说话，三个人一起看眼前那片雨帘。雨大得排水沟都吞不过来，水顺着路牙子流成一条小河，卷着落花和几片叶子打转。收废品的老头伸手试了试雨，把手收回来说：这雨好，地里的庄稼乐了。我忽然想起奶奶田里的秧苗，这会儿它们大概正仰着脖子喝饱吧。

等雨的时候，文具店老板搬出一个暖水瓶，给老头倒了杯茶；冷饮阿姨递给我一根冰棍，我还没开口，她也没要钱，说：拿着冰棍等雨，就不觉得长了。我们三个互不认识的人，就这么在窄窄的屋檐底下一字排开，边吃边看雨。一只麻雀落到路上的水洼里，匆匆忙忙洗了个澡，雨一急又飞走了。我想起刚才自己还急得不行，恨这场雨耽误我回家打游戏，现在倒好，人站在雨中间，什么也干不了，雨反而像一份礼物了。

雨停得跟它来一样突然。云还堆着，西边却撕开了一条亮。有人喊：彩虹！我抬头——一道彩虹，半拱形，挂在城边那一排楼顶上，上头红，底下紫，不算宽，可清楚得很，像谁刚画上去的，漆还没干。冷饮阿姨忘了收摊，老头忘了发动车，我扶着自行车站着，忘了自己身上的衣服还在滴水。

后来我躺在床上想：要是这场雨不来，我会一路骑回家，进屋，照旧打开手机，这道彩虹就跟我一点关系也没有了。是这场骤雨把我按下来，让我停，停了才看见。彩虹不等人，也不解释，它就挂那么几分钟，谁抬头谁赚到，谁低头谁错过。这个夏天，城上头不知道挂过多少道彩虹，都挂给了低头看手机的人头顶上。

到家晚了，妈妈问我怎么这么晚。我说：我看了一道彩虹。她问：然后呢？我说：然后它没了，我就回来了。今晚我在日记里写：这个夏天，我被一场雨强行按停过一次，这一停，比我急着赶去的所有事都值。

The Sudden Rain, the Eaves, and the Rainbow

July 18th, Saturday, thunderstorm then clear

The sudden rain this afternoon came without any warning at all. I had just walked out of the tutoring class building and looked up at the sky, thinking it would hold off long enough for me to get home. I was only halfway there on my bike when the raindrops came down bang, big as beans, hitting the asphalt road until it turned white with splashes. The sound was like somebody tipping a giant pot upside down over the whole street. I pushed my bike under the eaves of a stationery shop at the

roadside. Water ran down my sleeves, and my shoes went squelch-squelch with every step I took.

Under the eaves, besides me, there was a lady who sold cold drinks from a cart and an old man on an electric tricycle that collected scrap paper and bottles. Nobody said anything. The three of us just stood there watching the curtain of rain in front of us. The rain came down so hard that the gutters could not swallow it fast enough, and the water ran along the curb like a small river, carrying fallen flower petals and a few torn leaves, spinning as it went. The old man from the scrap cart reached out his hand, tested the rain, pulled his hand back, and said: this rain is good, the crops in the fields are going to be happy. I suddenly thought of Grandma's rice seedlings in the village. They must be stretching their necks and drinking their fill right now.

While we waited, the shop owner brought out a thermos and poured the old man a cup of tea, and the cold drink lady handed me a popsicle without my even asking, and she did not take my money, either. She said: hold a popsicle while you wait for the rain, and the waiting does not feel long. Three people who had never met stood in a row under the narrow eaves, eating and watching the rain. A sparrow landed in a puddle on the road, took a hurried little bath, and flew off when the rain came harder. I remembered that only ten minutes earlier I had been in a terrible hurry, angry that this rain was ruining my plan to get home and play games. Now I was standing in the middle of the rain with nothing to do at all, and the rain had turned into a present.

The rain stopped just as suddenly as it had started. The clouds were still piled up in mounds, but a band of light had already been laid down along the west side of the sky. Somebody shouted: a rainbow! I looked up. There it was, a rainbow, half an arch, hanging above the row of buildings at the edge of the city, red on the outside, violet on the inside, not very wide, but clear and bright, as if somebody had just painted it there and the paint was not dry yet. The cold drink lady forgot to pack up her cart, the old man forgot to start his engine, and I stood there with one hand on my bike, completely forgetting that my own clothes were still dripping water.

Later, lying in bed, I thought about it: if this rain had not come, I would have pedaled straight home, walked into my room, opened my phone as usual, and this rainbow would have had nothing to do with me at all. It was this sudden rain that forced me to stop, and it was the stopping that let me see it. The rainbow does not wait for anybody, and it does not explain itself to anybody either. It just hangs there for a few minutes. Whoever happens to be looking up gets to see it, and whoever keeps his head down simply misses it. How many rainbows must have hung over this city this summer, over the heads of all the people who were looking down at their screens?

When I finally got home, Mom asked me why I was so late. I said: I was watching a rainbow. She asked: and then? I said: and then it disappeared, and I came home. In my diary tonight I wrote one line: this summer, I was once forced to stop by a rain, and that stopping was worth more than everything I had been in such a hurry to get back to.